

**REMARKS**

Claims 26-52 are pending; and of these, claims 26, 32-33, 39-40, 48-49 and 50-52 have been amended, claim 27 has been canceled, and claims 53-54 are new. Thus, claims 26, and 28-54 are presented for examination; reconsideration of the instant application is respectfully requested in view of this Paper.

Under Section 103, the Examiner has rejected (1) claims 26-27, 35 and 40-51 as being unpatentable over Christensen (USP 3,720,027) in view of Foster (USP 6,607,803); (2) claims 28-32 as being unpatentable over Christensen in view of Foster and further in view of Zambelli et al. (USP 6,457,288); (3) claims 33-34 as being unpatentable over Christensen in view of Foster and further in view of Coffey (USP 2,280,631); (4) claims 35-38 as being unpatentable over Christensen in view of Foster and further in view of Akers (USP 2,154,390); (5) claim 52 as being unpatentable over Christensen in view of Foster and further in view of Akers; and (6) claim 39 as being unpatentable over Christensen in view of Foster. With respect to Applicant's claims, as amended, the Examiner's rejections are respectfully traversed.

Applicant has amended claim 26 to include the features of claim 27, now canceled, so as to state with greater particularity the invention recited therein. In doing so, Applicant has, in particular, emphasized that the respective grooves (of the layer of pressure resistance lightweight material) are of lesser length than the

respective edges at which the grooves are formed and do not extend to corners of the (multilayer) plate.

New claims 53 and 54 relate the cooperation and configuration, respectively, of Applicant's recited openings and furrows to direct heat to the recited panel from a heat source positionable beneath the lightweight material layer.

The Examiner asserts that Christensen teaches Applicant's construction, and in particular, the features now recited in amended claim 26. Applicant respectfully submits that Christensen does not teach such construction.

Instead, as Figure 1 of Christensen clearly shows, and as is explained with reference thereto at column 2, lines 27-30, the floor structure thereof includes elements 1 and 2; whereby elements 1 include a tongue along all four of their edges and elements 2 include corresponding keys along each of their edges. As shown in Figure 1 of Christensen, such keys extend along the entirety of elements 2 so as to extend to the corners thereof. In this way, Christensen's key-tongue configuration is used to provide the flooring arrangement shown in Figure 1.

Accordingly, and in view of this configuration, Christensen fails to teach or suggest Applicant's construction in which Applicant's grooves comprise a length less than their encompassing edges of the lightweight material layer. That is, Applicant's grooves do not extend the full length of the edges. In this way, since such construction enables the edge portions of Applicant's lightweight

material layer adjacent Applicant's grooves to lay flush with Applicant's panel, stability of the plane element, overall, is enhanced and connection between respective plane elements is optimized such that the potential for breakage or other damage when such connection is made is decreased.

Therefore, in view of the aforementioned, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of claim 26, and of those claims which depend therefrom so as to include the features thereof, be withdrawn.

Still further, Christensen addresses a floor structure intended to cover an ice rink so as to be required to be resistant to conditions relating to temperature and moisture. In contrast, Applicant's construction is directed to a heated flooring surface; thus, it is respectfully submitted that the features and aspects relating to such construction are not addressed by Christensen.

In this respect, and moreover, Applicant's new claims 53 and 54 recite additional features of Applicant's construction allowing for the distribution of heat to Applicant's panel from an associated heat source.

Foster, Zambelli et al., Coffey, and Akers add nothing with respect to the deficiencies noted above.


Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that Applicant's claim 26, as amended, and those claims which include the features thereof, patentably distinguish over Christensen, Foster, Zambelli et al., Coffee and Akers, either when taken alone or in combination.

No fee is believed due. If there is any fee due the USPTO is hereby authorized to charge such fee to Deposit Account No. 10-1250.


In light of the foregoing, the application is now believed to be in proper form for allowance of all claims and notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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